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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 05 USNATO 000169

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SUBJECT: READOUT: NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL MEETING APRIL
29,2009.

Classified By: Classified by Deputy Chief of Mission Walter E. Andrusys
zyn for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

11. (C/NF) Summary from the NAC Meeting:

-- AFGHANISTAN: Estonia increased its election support contribution from a platoon to a company for Helmand. SHAPE continues to report Elections Support Force shortfalls, despite the U.S. and OEF partners, recent commitments. Canada expressed its hope that efforts to build a broader political and practical relationship with Pakistan would be at a meeting of NATO or ISAF Foreign Ministers held in conjunction with the upcoming meeting of NATO-Russia Council Foreign Ministers, leading the Secretary General to point out that no decision had been taken on any such meetings. ISAF Senior Civilian Representative Gentilini said Afghan officials had not mentioned the proposed update of the NATO military technical agreement since February. The UK finished its policy review on Afghanistan.

-- BALKANS: The Secretary General (SYG) said that violent reconstruction-related demonstrations near Mitrovica highlighted the need for continued NATO and EU vigilance in Kosovo. Assistant Director of the International Military Staff Operations Division Major General Li Gobbi reported that 273 of 323 additional former Kosovo Protection Corps personnel invited to attend Kosovo Security Force training had accepted.

-- AFRICA: Allies agreed to take a number of steps toward the near-term establishment of a dedicated NATO counter-piracy (CP) operation.

-- IRAQ: no discussion

-- RESPONSE TO TERRORISM: The SYG offered his condolences to Turkey for the nine soldiers killed in a recent attack in the south of the country.

-- STATEMENTS ON POLITICAL TOPICS: The Czech Republic briefed on recent EU activity, while the UK briefed on a recent London conference addressing anti-smuggling efforts in Gaza.

--AOB: The Secretary General stressed the need to find a date for the NATO-Russia Council Foreign Ministerial before the

June Defense Ministerial. He also reported on the status of the NATO/Partnership for Peace exercises in Georgia, noting the withdrawal of a couple of countries. Ambassador Volker stressed the need to follow up on Summit discussions of contingency planning, while also urging Allies to stay in the Allied Ground Surveillance. The Secretary General said a working group had been set up to follow developments related to the swine flu outbreak. END SUMMARY.

Afghanistan

12. (C/NF) Afghanistan/Pakistan: Estonia announced that it will augment its company of troops in RC-South by an additional company, rather than the one platoon it pledged the Summit. SHAPE maintains that the election support force remains unfilled in Regional Command South. (Comment: In order to dispel this continuing perception, it would be useful if the U.S. could make an official announcement that increases in U.S. troops and a partners' contributions to Operation Enduring Freedom have, in effect, lowered the requirement, and the recently confirmed contributions of Australia, Estonia, and the UK have filled remaining gaps. End comment).

13. (C/NF) The Canadians joined the Secretary General (SYG) in welcoming the outcome of the April 27 Political Committee meeting, where Allies agreed to take forward a cooperation framework with Pakistan and establish a Contact Point Embassy

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(Turkey) in Islamabad. The Canadian PermRep asked that the NATO-Pakistan framework be a deliverable for a meeting of ISAF Foreign Ministers in conjunction with the upcoming NATO-Russia Council (NRC). The SYG said he was unaware that a decision had been taken to link the NRC meeting with an ISAF one, adding that further discussions on ministerial formats and dates were required. While noting that the proposed May 19 date for the NRC would not work for Secretary Clinton, Ambassador Volker said he did support the Canadian suggestion of linking the NRC meeting to a North Atlantic Council and even an ISAF-format meeting. . The SYG confirmed that the Defense Ministers, meeting June 11-12 would include an ISAF meeting. Also on Pakistan, the International Military Staff (IMS) reported on the April 11 meeting of the Trilateral Commission, where Pakistan had agreed to open a Border Cooperation Center (BCC) on its side of the border. A third BCC in Afghanistan would also be opened near Spin Buldak.

14. (C/REL ISAF) In response to a question from Ambassador Volker, NATO Senior Civilian Representative Fernando Gentilini (SCR)--participating by video link--said that Afghan officials had not mentioned Minister of Defense Wardak's proposed amendment of NATO's Military Technical Agreement (MTA) with Afghanistan in more than eight weeks. He said the focus in Kabul had shifted to politics, adding that resurrecting the MTA revision at this point could turn it into an election issue. While many people intend to declare candidacy for the Afghan presidency, the SCR said the field would probably narrow over the next four months. President Karzai and United Front candidate Dr. Abdullah were both looking for vice presidential running mates. Concern over a level playing field for candidates, he added, now dominates the international community's efforts to prepare for elections. Gentilini agreed with the International Military Staff assessment that the cancelation of Victory Day celebrations in Kabul on April 28 by Afghan National Security Forces demonstrated their increasing professionalism, and had minor public affairs impact.

15. (C/REL ISAF) Responding to PermRep questions, the SCR said the Shi'a Family Law is under review by Afghan government officials. Karzai could shelve the law somewhere in the process, but Gentilini thought this an unlikely outcome in

an election year on this highly politicized issue. The SCR expects the Afghans to offer a revision that will make the law more palatable to the population and international community. Despite a draft police law that would give some authority to provincial and district governors over local police, Gentilini said Minister of Interior Atmar continued to advocate for central management of the Afghan National Police (consistent with Afghanistan,s unitary system of government). He noted that Atmar had threatened to resign if he did not see movement toward this centralization.

¶6. (C/REL ISAF) Italy announced that it had finalized a bilateral arrangement for Serbia to send two junior diplomats to the Italian PRT in Herat to augment civilian activities there. The first Serbian participant will depart to Afghanistan in a few weeks, while the deployment of the second was being delayed due to budgetary concerns.

¶7. (C/REL ISAF) The UK reported that Prime Minister Gordon Brown would address Parliament later that day to present the outcome of the UK,s policy review on Afghanistan. The foundation of the review is that there can be no stability in Afghanistan without stability in Pakistan. Key elements include a broader regional focus, a joint civil-military approach, and long-term capacity building. The UK said it would circulate the Prime Minister,s statement and a policy paper.

¶8. (C/NF) The IMS noted that peace deals between the Pakistani government and militants are providing freedom of movement to insurgent groups, who have set up checkpoints in the settled Buner district. Poppy farmers have begun

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extracting opium from fields across Afghanistan,s Helmand province. The highest concentration of insurgent activity in Regional Command (RC) West is in Bala Baluk, Farah province (Note: ISAF has an Operational Maneuver and Liaison Team shortfall in Bala Baluk for an Afghan army battalion that will come out of training in June 2009. End note).

Balkans

¶9. (C/NF) Balkans: The Secretary General (SYG) said that violent reconstruction-related demonstrations near Mitrovica highlight that tensions remained high in Kosovo despite the positive evolution of the security situation over the past 12 months. He noted that even if NATO and EU intervention helped avert escalation, both organizations must remain vigilant.

¶10. (C) In response to an Albanian query, Assistant Director of the International Military Staff Operations Division Major General Li Gobbi said that NATO had no solid intelligence indicating the involvement of a structured organization in the violence. While acknowledging that some local Kosovo Serb community leaders might be involved, he said that this seemed more spontaneous than organized, noting that it was a situation where both sides were competing for a limited amount of construction space.. The SYG said he would check into the possibility of fulfilling an Albanian request for EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) officials to brief the Council on EULEX,s assessment of the Kosovo security situation.

¶11. (C) MG Li Gobbi said that 415 recruits out of 455 passed during the first round of Kosovo Security Force (KSF) basic training. The selection board has chosen 404 applicants for the first round of KSF training for civilian recruits. The KFOR Deputy Commander on April 10 issued invitations to 323 additional former Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC) personnel to attend KSF training, of which 273 accepted the offer.

Africa

¶12. (C/NF) Africa: The Council achieved consensus in favor of an active, long-term NATO counter-piracy (CP) role that fits within the wider international effort, in particular the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS). Allies formally agreed to four SYG proposals:

-- to task NATO Military Authorities to revise OPLAN 10709 (Operation Allied Protector) to strengthen the current mandate and rules of engagement. New measures include the ability to detain pirates and to intervene in situations where pirates have already taken control of a ship. (Note: Revised rules of engagement are under Military Committee consideration and should soon be submitted to Council.);

-- that the International Staff (IS) should develop a NAC Initiating Directive for a dedicated NATO CP mission that would include capacity building; escort, deterrence and intervention operations; and proactive searches for pirates and mother ships. Ambassador Volker urged a quick decision on the NAC Initiating Directive;

-- to enhance NATO,s political, military and legal engagement with the CGPCS and its associated working groups. NATO will participate in the working group meetings in London and Copenhagen next week; and

-- to urgently begin work on developing a shared legal framework for detention and prosecution of captured pirates and the embarkation of armed personnel on escorted vessels. The Netherlands led a chorus of Allies in emphasizing the vital importance of having a common legal framework for the detention and transfer of pirates to third states, and that

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it must ensure the human rights of the detainees. The Netherlands noted that a boarding policy must ensure the consent of the flag state is taken into account, and that embarked security personnel should only be used in conjunction with an escorting ship and never as an independent measure. Ambassador Volker emphasized the urgency of establishing a shared legal framework and noted that NATO is able to pursue multiple tracks simultaneously. The U.S. and UK advocated taking advantage of the legal foundation that nations and the EU have already established. The IS and NATO Legal Advisor are planning to visit the AU HQ and Kenya in pursuit of an agreement.

¶13. (C) Portugal questioned NATO,s ability to generate forces for a new NATO CP operation. Denmark encouraged the use of Standing NATO Maritime Groups (SNMGs). France cautioned that NATO,s capacity building work should not dilute other initiatives,8 and insisted that a trust fund be established based on voluntary contributions.

¶14. (C) France, supported by Belgium, Spain, and Italy, emphasized the need for the new NATO operation to complement EU operation Atalanta. Belgium, Spain, and Italy also called for coordination with other actors. Turkey reiterated its view that ad hoc coordination among deployed assets is necessary, that current staff-to-staff coordination is working, and noted its support for broader cooperation within the CGPCS.

Response to Terrorism

¶15. (C/NF) Response to Terrorism: The SYG offered his condolences to Turkey for the nine soldiers killed in a recent attack in the south of the country.

Statements on Political Subjects

¶16. (C/NF) Statements on Political Subjects: The Czech Republic briefed on recent EU activity, noting that at the recent GAERC meeting ministers discussed Ukraine, Moldova, Somalia, Iran and plans for the upcoming Eastern Partnership Summit. A meeting of the EU-Russia Permanent Partnership Council was held on the margins during which the Czech Presidency tried to address Russian concerns over the planned Eastern Partnership Summit. The Czech Republic also noted Albania,s formal application for EU membership.

¶17. (C/NF) The United Qgdom briefed on a recent London conference addressing anti-smuggling efforts in Gaza. Among the attendees were Israel and NATO and the EU in an observer capacity; Egypt was invited but did not attend. The conference focused on countering smuggling in the Southern Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. A program of action established at the conference is to be further developed at a follow-up meeting to be held in Ottawa next month.

Any Other Business

¶18. (C/NF) Any Other Business: The Secretary General stressed the need to quickly determine a date for the NATO-Russia Council Foreign Ministerial, arguing that he believed there was a clear agreement at the Summit to do this before the June Defense Ministerial.

¶19. (C/NF) The SYG noted that Switzerland and Serbia had decided they will not participate in the upcoming Partnership for Peace (PfP) exercises in Georgia, while Armenia and Kazakhstan were still considering their participation. (Note: The Swiss Mission informs us that Bern,s decision was taken

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because of the unique role Switzerland plays as protecting power for Russian and Georgian interests, not on the merits of the exercise.)

¶20. (C/NF) Amb. Volker thanked the SYG for his report on the Allied Ground Surveillance (AGS) Program and encouraged Allies to make efforts to retain funding for the program. Amb. Volker also noted that Allies need to discuss how to reinforce contingency planning, as Pres. Obama had discussed at the Summit.

¶21. (C/NF) The SYG noted that an IS/IMS working group is monitoring the possible implications of the swine flu.
VOLKER